

**FOCUS MACOMB
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Community Central Bank
120 North Main
Mount Clemens, MI 48043**

June 14, 2006

Members Present:

Bill Andre – Treasurer – Hydra-Lock Corporation
Karen Czernel – District Director – Cong. Candice Miller
John Hill – President – Midwest Mold
Brian Kern – President – J.G. Kern Enterprises
Rick Kincaid – President – K & F Electronics – Co Chair
Ed Kubes – General Manager – Lakeside Mall
John Murphy – Company Strategist – Jarvis Construction Services
Bill Quinlan – Architect – Quinlan Associates Architect
Ron Reed – President – Community Central Bank – Co-Chair
Ted Schollenberger – President – Mineral Springs Development
Terance Thomas – Sr. Vice President – St. John Health
Chester Zochowski – CEO – REI Group

Members Not Present:

Robert Bova – Controller – Armada Rubber Mfg.
Ron Chriss – Regional Manager – DTE Energy
Robert Kegerreis – COO – Bartek, Inc.
Diana Kolakowski – Economic Development Director – City of Warren
Jim Lindsay – President – Acra Grindiing
Michael Malone – Architect – Planners in Architecture
Gary Popiel – CEO – Henry Ford/Bi-County Hospital
Lou Sabel – General Manager – United Machining, Inc.

Others Present:

Sharon Laskowski – Coordinator
Macomb County Planning and Economic Development
Bob Tess – Program Manager
Macomb County Planning and Economic Development

DISCUSSION OF IDENTIFIED ISSUES

Mr. Reed noted that the committee has provided ideas, issues, and concerns for consideration. A summary of the May 17, 2006 meeting was distributed to the members. Economic conditions are a statewide issue and we don't want to duplicate efforts. However, the committee wants to ensure original thoughts are presented and that Macomb County takes advantage of good ideas and opportunities.

Among the issues identified were:

- . The tax burden on businesses
- . Collaboration between business and government
- . Commitment of leaders to improving the environment
- . Expansion and retention of businesses
- . The region's leaders should celebrate the growth of new companies
- . Macomb County businesses should be showcased in a positive manner

Mr. Tess said that there are many business success stories that are never reported because the media are not interested. Publishers believe that people who buy newspapers don't necessarily want to read success stories. However, there should be a place in the media for stories that help the public understand the importance of business in their daily lives. A committee member noted that radio stations can play a part in business promotion with interviews, etc. Businesses could be asked to invest in the promotion plan.

Mr. Kubes, General Manager of Lakeside Mall, remarked that national retailers hear adverse reports about the economy in Michigan. A newsletter has been established to describe to the retailers the positive activities at Lakeside Mall. Mr. Quinlan said we need to look at companies, such as GM, whose futures are very bright.

Mr. Thomas, Sr. Vice President for St. John Health, remarked that a campaign promoting Macomb County's businesses could be undertaken. Identify the organizations that we want to address and be sure that our speakers are armed with the facts. We also need to find out why some business owners think Macomb County is an awful place to do business. A CEO for Macomb County would be beneficial in obtaining information in an efficient manner.

DISCUSSION OF IDENTIFIED ISSUES (Continued)

Mr. Reed noted that the promotion of Macomb County as a positive place to live and work is important. Some business owners can use new ideas for expanding sales - particularly in manufacturing. Manufacturers can increase volume by finding ways to attract new customers. Mr. Reed asked if it is worth helping manufacturers sell to the government. Mr. Zochowski said that dealing with the government is a long process. Businesses have to be versatile. Networking is very important.

Ms. Czernel remarked that a seminar would be held at Mac & Rays on September 18, 2006. The seminar will bring TACOM and other prime contractors together. How do companies get on the General Services Administration (GSA) schedule? GSA representatives will be present to supply details. A representative of the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (P-TAC) will address the process of obtaining contracts with the defense industry. Prime contractor representatives, such as General Dynamics, will also attend. If the business community wants to compete, they have to get to know each other.

Mr. Reed remarked that the members must decide on how to proceed with their recommendations. Our mission is to assemble ideas that could result in improving the business climate in Macomb County. We could say that we have similar interests. We want to form a business network. Or, it could be a project that requires financing. Mr. Andre suggested alternative fuel that could create jobs.

Mr. Tess noted that there is support on the Board of Commissioners for alternative fuels. A possible suggestion could be funding for a feasibility study for producing a specific fuel product. TACOM is researching alternative fuels, which may provide an opportunity for us to work together. Mr. Andre suggested that he would research and compile information on this topic.

Mr. Kincaid suggested job fairs for business promotion. Some members expressed an interest in a form of an "Automation Alley" organization. Mr. Tess remarked that two business development professionals would be hired to increase outreach and attract new investment. Also, Macomb County is a member of Automation Alley. The county has been represented by the Detroit Regional Economic Partnership on trade missions, etc. Mr. Hill remarked that some businesses might appreciate the opportunity to be represented during these events.

DISCUSSION OF IDENTIFIED ISSUES (Continued)

Mr. Thomas noted that St. John Health supports local businesses by sourcing their purchases locally. We have to challenge other large employers and local governments to do the same. Mr. Murphy remarked that Clinton Township purchases locally whenever they can. The committee should encourage this process. Mr. Tess stated that this committee could ask the Board to consider establishing that as a policy for the county itself. The local units of government would have to be approached by residents or businesses making the request.

Mr. Tess noted that the three leading business sectors in Macomb County are manufacturing, scientific and technical services, and retail trade. Of the three, it's the wages from manufacturing that sustain our quality of life. Mr. Kubes stated that Lakeside Mall has had a gain in retail sales. However, the gain will not last if manufacturing does not rebound.

A member remarked that businesses should be encouraged to market themselves by attending trade shows around the globe. Mr. Tess said that the U.S. Commercial Service organizes such efforts through the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. A member of this organization works within our office three days a week. Also, there is a target market study being drafted that will identify clusters of business sectors. Another member stated that a business-to-business directory, for example, might be a good idea. Mr. Hill stated that available resources should be promoted. Mr. Reed said that a mechanism for providing better communication would be worthwhile.

Mr. Tess reminded the membership that Macomb County has a website – www.MacombBusiness.com which identifies assistance available to the business community and the general public. He added that enhancements to the website could be a recommendation to the Board. The website must be thoughtfully maintained because the integrity of the information provided is very important. Mr. Reed stated that a website is an effective way to promote services and that the committee members should think about what enhancements they might want to see.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Focus Macomb Business Development Committee will be held on July 12, 2006 at the Community Central Bank Conference Room, 120 North Main, Mount Clemens, Michigan at 11:45 a.m.

